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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 51 (2012) 444 – 448

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

ARTSEDU 2012

Relationship between art and politics

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine relationship between art and politics. The study was carried out as a case study approach and realized with seven volunteer participants who have idea about both art and politics. Data were gathered with semi-structured interview form. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. At the end of the study, it was determined that art contributes politics in different areas such as critical thinking, aesthetic, directing societies, providing peace and order. Also it has been obtained from the study that art' specific politics is directly proportional to with art' world view or beauties human-specific. Also, it was determined that artists should have a say in politics, but artists gone into politics cannot act as an artist as they before did. On the other hand, it was determined that art and artist affects societies without reflect a political opinion and preserving own artistic identity. It was recommended that art must inform society about communal, social and economic problems. Both artists and politicians must be leading in order to reach art's deserve position or target expected.

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Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).**Keywords:** Art, Politics, Artist, Politician

1. Introduction

Art deals with socioeconomic as well as political facts in the community in the light of behaviour patterns of human beings in certain periods, and it leads the community's artistic wants and demands (Terzi, 2008). Therefore, many states today support some branches of arts due to economic, social, political or ideological reasons, and assume a variety of roles in the field of fine arts (Kovancılar and Kahrman, 2007). Ideological formats assigned by people with different ideas and interests in order to be in power (Kapani, 2007) constitute the basis of the relationship between art and politics. In this context, the idea of art and politics makes one recall Platon's "excellent state" proposal and a process which covers "autonomy of the art". According to Platon's approach of excellent state, which indicates the potential between art and politics, art is not competent in politics, and makes us deviant by dominating our feelings (Kreft, 2009), because Platon thinks that art is a reality world which can be perceived by mind, not through senses (Moran, 2004). As for the autonomy of art, which is related with independence of art from all manners of politics, resolves such potential by differing art from politics. It emphasizes that art must be independent on all purposes except for itself (Kreft, 2009). This study is carried out on that basis. It discusses the relationship between art and politics. The study seeks answers for questions such as what contributions art makes to politics, how artists' having a voice in politics affects the art and politics, how important the art' specific politics is

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for the community and politics, and what relationship there is between artist's political ideological view and the population s/he represents.

2. Method

The study was carried out as a case study approach and realized with seven volunteer participants who have idea about both art and politics in Çayeli district of Rize .Data were gathered with semi-structured interview form. Form consisting of five questions was developed with three experts' opinions by researchers. Content analysis was used to analyze the data.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants Involved in Study

Participant	Gender	Professional Experience	Professional Branch	School Graduated
K1	K	13 Years	Painting	KTÜ
K2	E	12 Years	Painting	Atatürk University
K3	E	11 Years	Painting	İnönü University
K4	E	9 Years	Painting	Atatürk University
K5	K	4 Years	Painting	KTÜ
K6	E	9 Years	Painting	Gazi University
K7	K	4 Years	Painting	KTÜ

3. Findings

In this section, the data were analyzed using content analysis and interpreted.

Table 2. Views on what contributions art makes to politics

Participants' Opinions	Participants
Perfection in politics, architecture and economy	K1, K3
Peace and Order	K1, K2, K3
Gaining the Skill of Thought	K2, K3, K4, K7
Aesthetical Point of View	K1, K2, K3, K5
Raising Social Consciousness	K3, K5
Creating the Language of Universal Fraternity	K3
Integrating Modern Life with Daily Life	K3, K5
Bringing Up Creative Brains	K3
Democracy and Freedom	K3
Leading Societies	K3, K4, K5, K7
Look at with artists' point of view	K4
Balancing Opposing Views	K7
The Skill of Tolerating the Other	K6

According to participants, Art contributes politics in different areas such as critical thinking, aesthetic, directing societies, providing peace and order. On this matter, K1 said *"Art is something spiritual and emotional. It doesn't need politics. On the other hand, all units in politics need art. Justice is maintained when art guides politics. Though aim of politics seems to be the human beings' happiness, politics is about having others subdue and produce works in compliance with definite terms. Art is impossible to be imperfect. Thus, political brains can achieve perfection in economy, education and architecture by following the artist."* K3 said *"Art, despite not being in a relationship with power and capital, brings considerable contributions to creating social consciousness, universal fraternity language, and integration of modern life with daily life. Democratic freedoms, formation of the country, and bringing up creative brains that are able to think undoubtedly give meaning to politics of a country. Art is political window of a country. It is possible to see art's contribution to politics from aesthetics and architecture to maintaining of peace and order"*.

Table3. Views on artists' having a voice in politics

Participants' Opinions	Participants
• Those involved in politics with an artist's perspective are discarded soonest.	K1
• I don't think artists that enter politics take a step for art	K2
• Artists can hardly exist in politics as they are supposed to be opposing	K3
• Socially prominent people's wearing the hat of a politician and explicitly depicting their political views in a biased manner affects art and artists negatively	K4
• Aim of the artist should be to lead politics via her/his art rather than doing politics	K5
• A politician cannot remain as an artist	K6
• We want to see artists in politics, but they do are not artists any longer	K7

Most of the respondents think that artists should have a say in politics, but add that they cannot sustain their position as artists in politics. In this context, respondents explained their positive and negative opinion regarding artists' involvement in politics as follows.

Table4. Views on artists' entering politics

Category	Participants' Opinions	Participants
Positive	Taking art and artists to the place they deserve	K2
	Proliferation of democratic freedom	K3
	Enlightening the country	K3
Negative	The risk of losing or leading the group administered	K1, K4, K5, K7
	Emergence of politics in pieces of art	K1, K4, K5, K6
	Loss of artistic value of the piece of art	K4
	Loss of artist ID	K2, K6, K7
	Inappropriateness of art to transfer political thought	K4

Participants have a negative attitude towards artists' entering politics due to the reasons such as "emergence of politics in pieces of art" and "loss of artist ID". On this matter, K4 said *"If an artist gets involved in politics, traces of politics can be seen in her/his product. As s/he attempts to use art in order to emphasize her/his political ideological view, artistic value of the piece of art becomes controversial. It is inappropriate for art to transfer political thought"*. K5 said *"Who is involved in arts should have a political point of view. Only if an artist reflects such a point of view onto her/his artistic performance, her/his personal views can be seen in the pieces of art and attract her/his followers onto that view"*. K6 said *"I totally oppose to artists' entering politics because political ID of an artist surpasses her/his artistic performance in that case"*. K7 said *"As an individual, an artist has a philosophy in parallel with her/his opinion regarding art. S/he can be close to this or that political view. But s/he is competent in her/his art only. If s/he wants to expand her/his competence to politics, her/his followers might have internal conflict. S/he cannot go on performing art efficiently then."*

Table5. Views on whether art has its own politics

Participants' Opinions	Participants
• Art doesn't have politics; rather it has a world view.	K1
• Art's politics lies in human beings and all beauties of human beings	K2
• Art's politics is a revolutionist stance	K3
• Art movements and their leaders show that art has its own politics	K4
• Art has its own politics and an opposing attitude towards social events.	K5
• It is frightening and inconvenient to think art has its own politics	K6
• The idea of art as a political view carries it away from its artistic ID and turns into something functional	K7

Majority of the participants think “art doesn’t have its own politics”. According to the participants, politics of art itself is directly proportional with the world view it has or beauties peculiar to human beings. Moreover, artists are able to affect communities by serving in certain areas under their artistic identity. World view or politics of art is related with fields such as social ethics, behave humane and freedom. In this context, Participations expressed art’ specific politics fields as peace (K1),sharing of(K1), fine ethics (K1, K2), perfect spirit (K1),human being(K1, K2), existence (K3), freedom (K1, K3, K4, K5), independence (K3), social events (K3, K4, K5), revolutionist stance(K3, K4) and aesthetics (K7).On this issue, K1 said “*Art doesn’t have its politics; rather it has a world view. If we call it politics, it covers politics for peace, sharing, social ethics, perfect spirit and behaving humane*”. K2 said “*Art should have its own politics. That should be based on social ethics, human being and beauties peculiar to human beings*”. K3 said “*Art is about existing, freedom and independent. It is a revolutionist stance which blooms out flowers*.” Finally, K7 said “*Art’s own politics corresponds to the view of arts or aesthetic view*”.

Table6. Importance of artist’s political ideological view from political and social aspects

Participants’ Opinions	Participants	Participants’ Opinions	Participants
Decrease in crime rate	K1	Access to the target audience following the artist	K4
More blessing	K1	Aesthetic understanding	K2
Happy society	K1	Regulating interpersonal relations	K1, K2
A world without wars and hunger	K1	Improving science	K3
Transferring social events	K1, K3, K5	Developing authenticity and creativity	K3, K6
Development of societies	K2, K3, K5, K7	Solving social matters or attracting attention	K1, K5
Society’s perspective of life	K2, K7	Determination of special individuals with different opinions	K6

Participants pointed out artists’ ideological views can be realized by means of enlightening and informing communities and cultural transfer of social problems. On this issue, K1 said “*...Art is universal and provides contribution to politics in many aspects such as improving fractured interpersonal relationships and decreasing of crime rate... Art has a bridge function as it conveys to other generations problems, cultural values and lifestyle of the society in which the artist lives*” K3 said “*Art has an integral point of view, and a nature which transfers social events and helps keep societies on their feet. An artist functions as brain of a country. S/he dreams, produces authentic pieces, wants to know, and researches. S/he plays an important role in changing communities*.” K4 said “*The artist’s emphasis on a political ideological view causes her/his piece of art to lose its artistic value. This brings contribution to politics in terms of communicating with target audience of the artist while harming the community at the same time*”. K5 said “*The artist should draw attention onto shortcomings and deformations in the society avoiding any influence in her/his works. This can help eliminate the situation*.” K6 said “*Art can help determine special people with different ideas*.” K7 said “*The artist guide rest of the society and present different points of view with her/his unbiased ideology and philosophy*”.

Table7. Relationship between artist’s ideological view and the population s/he represents

Participants’ Opinions	Participants
“Setting light to the community”	K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7
Universality of Art	K1, K2, K4, K5, K7
Being influenced by the community	K1, K3, K6, K7
Taking the lead	K1, K3
Discussing the truth and beauties free of fair	K1, K2
Addressing to all	K2, K3, K4, K5
Being open to criticism	K1
Being tolerant and open to interaction	K1, K3
Integrating art with philosophy, politics and life itself	K3
Taking responsibilities against life	K3, K5
Keeping at the fore front artistic concerns and attempt of expression	K4
Being in constant change and development	K4, K5
Expressing thoughts freely	K4, K5

The participants said that artists need to shed light onto the society without isolating themselves and limiting art to a certain ideology, and keep at the fore front universal nature of the art in order to address to every individual. On this topic, K1 spoke “*Art is the representative of the whole universe, not a certain political view. If an artist isolates her/himself, this contradicts with the art itself as it is selfish. It turns into a closed system like a kingdom that refuses criticism.*” K2 said “*Ideological thoughts are narrower than art. The latter speaks to people at all levels. Even if an artist isolates her/himself and focuses on her/his own ideology, s/he should share it with the society. Otherwise, the piece of art becomes meaningless.*”. K3 said “*Social issues are under politics, not art. Therefore, artist is not an isolated body coming from the outer world. S/he performs art tolerantly knowing that all elements interact with each others on the Earth.*” K4 said “*Art is independent; so, it shouldn't be regarded as representative of a certain political attitude. Art requires universality and addresses to all parts of the society. The artist has her/his own philosophy, feelings and thoughts. S/he keeps up with the society and develops all the time. While shedding light onto the society, s/he gets her/his piece of art to speak her/his feelings.*” K5 said “*Art is something that must reach all segments of the society and make individuals more responsible for realities of that society. An artist should freely express her/himself without sticking to one political view. Otherwise alienates her/him, and her/his universality becomes trapped into an endless circle. S/he cannot avoid repeating her/himself.*” K6 said “*An artist should be neither distracted from nor in the heart of the society itself. S/he should put forth ideas by means of art and guide others without being restricted by a certain political view.*” K7 said “*Art resembling a certain political view will be restricted to that side. We expect art to resemble, if so, views at universal scale.*”

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the study, we found that art contributes to politics such as critical thinking, gaining aesthetic perspective, guiding communities, and maintaining peace and order. Besides, it was determined that artists should be influential in politics, but artists, upon entering politics, cannot sustain their position in politics as artists. Also the research showed that art's own politics is directly proportional with its philosophy and beauties peculiar to human beings, and if art is to have its politics, it would influence societies as a result of serving in certain fields by preserving the artist ID, not as a result of being involved in politics. According to results of the study, politics of art itself is directly proportional with the world view it has, and art expands the world view by serving to social areas like “social ethics”, “behave humane” and “freedom”. Also the study showed that artists would remain detached from the whole society by staying isolated and sticking to their respective political views only. Otherwise, they would jeopardize both art itself and the target audience behind them. In this context, it was realized that artists should set light to the society without being isolated from the rest or restricting their art to a certain political view, and they should hold art and universality of art one step ahead so that they can speak to every individual in the society.

In light of the study findings, it is suggested that art, within politics, should enlighten the community by setting light to social, communal, economic and political realities or matters. Not only artists but also politicians should fulfill their responsibilities against art so that they can pave the way for elevating art to the position or target it deserves.

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